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ABSTRACT

Different theories have been offered about why some men rape. The interactive theory of rape describes coercive elements in heterosexual relations resulting from faulty socialization or abuse in childhood. Prevention according to this theory would involve mental health specialists incorporating preventive strategies into parent training, guidance, curriculua, and individual counseling. The social control theory of rape assumes class and power differences: women, being less powerful in social and political influence and economic power, are afraid to challenge the more powerful men. Prevention in the social control theory would involve counselors teaching democratic values, applied to heterosexual relations, to the young. Private citizens could promote prevention by participating in the political process, revising favored male status, and objecting to sexist violence and vulnerability/oppression portrayals in the media. A third theory of rape, the physiological theory, is posited on physique, libido, and aggression differences between women and men. Prevention in this theory would focus on changing societal norms and using family educational efforts to redefine appropriate sexual behavior. In each of these three theoretical approaches, a thread of learned behavior is indicated, whether called modeling, education, or new content. But people always have a choice of behavior. In order to prevent rape, all adults, men and women, must stop practices that support rapists' violence toward women, and must teach acceptable behaviors through personal relationships and communication. (NRB)

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SHOULD WE WHISTLE AS WE SHIRK? WHAT IS RAPE PREVENTION?

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Should We Whistle As We Shirk? What is Rape Prevention?

Margery A. Neely

The man stealthily climbs in through an open window, knife in hand. The woman, startled awake by the hand on her mouth and the cold steel at her throat, has a split second to decide how to prevent a rape.

Workshops Offer Whistles

Mental health workers returning from Rape Prevention clinics talk excitedly about the latest rape prevention ideas. They hear that a woman could blow a whistle, spray mace, stick a hat pin, scream, use a handhold to levitate the attacker into the great beyond, or grab a groin (Csida & Csida, 1974; Krulewitz & Kahn, 1983; Krulewitz & Kahn, 1983; Sanford & Fetter, 1979; Rodabaugh & Austin, 1981; Unger, 1978).

Following an attack, prevention of further rape takes the form of blowing the whistle on a perpetrator: confronting the offender at work, publishing his name, writing letters to his boss about him, and circulating blacklists (Bode, 1978; Richmond & Shoop, 1984). Broader strategies include returning construction workers' whistles, securing better lighting, bettering police treatment, administering "chemical castration," setting up escort services, and taking back the night. Seven-month-old babies and seventy-year-old senior citizens--or a woman with a knife at her throat--would have some trouble preventing rape with these strategies. Moreover, the tactics lull people into viewing rape prevention as a female problem. "There, now, I bought you a whistle."

Rape prevention has taken on a meaning different from that involved in preventing other health trauma, such as cancer and the common cold. It has become protection against imminent or continuing rape. These tactics are

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admirable in that they do protect without restricting a potential victim's freedom. Yet, we are whistling while we shirk from dealing with the actual, more difficult conditions fostering rape. Preventive strategies would actually forestall difficulties which may arise in the future (Whiteley, 1984, p. 69). We do have some data and some speculation about the developments in our society that countenance rape and therefore can be changed to prevent rape.

Why Rape?

The split second that the woman has in which to decide how to respond has been the focus of much literature. But what leads to this moment when a few men rape but others do not?

Different theories have been offered about why some men rape. First, faulty socialization, abuse within families or conditioning encourage acting out behavior.

Second, society's worship of economic and political power leads to acts of intimidation.

Third, the physiological theory variously explains that evolution dictates that humans must insure the survival of the fittest, or that genetic imbalances account for "a devil hormone that made me do it," or that biologically, males are driven to be more aggressive.

Comments from Rapists

Rapists--including those who rape on dates--tell interviewers that rape was "my right" (Lynch, 1985; Merton, 1985), "the family did not treat me right," or the action was neither violent nor extreme but had the thrill of "I gotcha" (Levine & Koenig, 1982; Sussman & Bordwell, 1981). Some men are sexually ignorant, viewing sexuality as inseparable from aggression or as a means of establishing masculinity.

It is unclear whether interviewers and/or therapists provide cues to these men that shape their explanations of why they raped. Certainly, not every man who had poor experiences is a rapist. Most men recognize that they personally choose their actions.

Theories of rape therefore only provide the best current review of why rape occurs and what form preventive measures should take. As the old adages say, we may be whistling to keep from being afraid or for want of thought, but we do not see more clearly for doing so.

Faulty Socialization and Abuse

The interactive theory of rape describes coercive elements in heterosexual relations (BarOn & Webster, 1978). These elements are a result of faulty socialization or abuse, seated in childhood experiences crossing all social classes. Certain patterns recur in the background and personality of men committing violent crimes (Yahraes & Robins, 1979; Welsh, 1978; Wolfgang, 1978).

Faulty socialization may occur because of a lack of proper childhood experiences. Interactions with others should develop a conscience, provide appropriate information, foster intimacy with others, teach limits and delayed gratification, and indicate how to act under stress. Instead, the acting out child develops an antisocial personality. The pattern is identifiable early in life by parents, teachers, and peers as lying, stealing, truancy, destructiveness, refusal to follow rules, and lack of closeness to others. It occurs about four times more often in boys than girls. The antisocial pattern seldom begins in adulthood (Coleman, 1964; Yahraes & Robins, 1979). The pattern of living is perpetuated through behavior. An example is the characteristic comment by the rapist about aggressively stealing what he wants (Coleman, 1964).

In 1982, 27 percent of the rape arrests were of young men, 18-22 years old, and 52 percent were of men under 25.

Many antisocial personalities do not come to the attention of authorities. About half the rapists are married and living with a spouse, and they rape to relieve a buildup of hostility and tension.

Antisocial parents increase the likelihood that children, particularly those with a middling tendency toward acting out, will grow up with the same tendency (Yahraes & Robins, 1979). Single parent families are detrimental to proper socialization only if the antisocial parent is no longer countered by one providing a warm and loving relationship. More important are genetic factors, perinatal factors and early influences. Consistent discipline and supervision are critical; when adequate during adolescence, only 9 percent of children referred to a St. Louis guidance clinic were later diagnosed antisocial.

Abusive parents model violence and hostility. The pattern can become a way of life for the children as they relate to other people. Abusive parents often believe that to spare the rod is to spoil the child, that children are evil, and that abuse is a way of life. They think babies should obey commands and that their own abuse as children was proper (Segal, 1979; Starr, 1979).

Brody (1984) cited ongoing research by Egeland with 200 children who were deemed at high risk from having parents judged to have difficulty fulfilling parental roles. Some of the most severe effects were found among those who were emotionally deprived, psychologically abused ("psychologically unavailable mothering").

The recent reports of sexual abuse of children in day-care centers and a growing literature on incest would suggest that perhaps Freud was wrong to bow to pressure that made him re-cast reported infant-young child sexual experiences as fantasies. The experiences may indeed have been real. The

evening news reports that pornographers have a hard time proving to the most liberal minded that minors should be used in films because "they really want sex." Children do not ask for such abuse. Moreover, slightly over half the people polled in the United States believe that pornography leads people to commit rape (U.S. Department of Justice, 1983, Table 2.78).

Non-abusive, prosocial homes also condition little boys. Lynn (1966) wrote incisively on the effects on young boys of being punished and jeered at for exhibiting characteristics of the opposite sex. They are conditioned to hate (women) things female. A recent article called fraternities the last bastion of males who do not believe in equality for women (Merton, 1985). In contrast, recent studies of nurturant fathers show strong perceptions and positive effects on children (e.g., Cordes, 1983; Greenfield, 1981; Hunter & Youniss, 1982).

Critique of Interactive Theory

Humans have choices. Not bad parents, bad training, nor abuse universally predict the priming of a rapist.

Prevention in Interactive Theory

If this theory makes the most sense, mental health specialists can incorporate preventive strategies into parent training, guidance, and curricula as well as into individual counseling. Parents must be active listening models of healthy relationships, paying attention to the child who is speaking to indicate understanding, and carefully choosing substitute caregivers who do the same. A conscience develops partly through conscious reasoning about one's own values and partly through empathy. Empathy is understanding another person's emotions, including when one's own action has caused that person to feel bad. Many successful examples of teaching children self-control through teaching them to think about thinking exist. Self-control is a form of internal self-talk about thoughts and behavior

(Flavell, 1979; Greenfield, 1981; Hoffman, 1979; Yahraes & White, 1979). A side example of self-talk appears in studies of date rape. College women refuse to believe that date rape can happen to them and, when it does, feel they owed a guy for the date and so on (Lynch, 1985).

Foundations of healthy relationships include appropriate sex education, treasuring intimate relations, and responsibility to self and partner. Sex information has usually been limited to menarche and the "plumbing," while most boys hear nothing of wet dreams. The Sarrels (1983) coined the term "semenarche" for this development. The degree to which intimacy is cherished and types of acceptable sexual behavior as well as source of information vary by social class. Procreation is seldom the intent of intercourse (Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin, 1973; Rosenberg & Bensman, 1971; Sarrel & Sarrel, 1983).

Now, in families, conflicts do occur. Alternatives to physical violence for handling conflict can be learned. A family that agrees it will not tolerate violence can use other outlets for stress reduction. Sports, games, and labor demand vigorous physical activity that reduces tension. Relaxation techniques and biofeedback can even be taught to the very young.

Societal norms of an authoritarian head of family must be changed using strategies such as family circles, churches using the new nonsexist lectionary, society's viewing women as capable adults, and families treasuring daughters as well as sons.

Preschool screening and treatment for acting out behaviors should be demanded by educators and parents in each state. The procedure is authorized by federal legislation (but not yet funded widely).

Economic and Political Power

Rape as a theoretical form of social control assumes class and power differences (BarOn & Webster, 1978; Sparks, 1978). That is, women, being less powerful in social and political influence and economic power, are

afraid to challenge men and men feel that power (Brownmiller, 1975; Leo, 1984; Rosenblatt, 1983). Rape data going back 100 years also show increased rates during times of prosperity as the men without economic power contrast sharply with those with economic power (MacDonald, 1971).

Male and female status defining control over life's options differ according to each sex's economic power (Blumberg, 1979). For example, women's earnings contrasted with men's have dropped steadily: women earned 64¢ to each $1 earned by men in 1955 and 57¢ in 1975. The differences in earnings reduce power over available options.

One historical explanation is that women contributed to a man's economic power but subsumed their own through marriage. Married women contributed free labor and clear lines of inheritance (Durant, 1963). Moreover, the industrial revolution drew men into a family wage earner pattern that took away economic contributions of wives and children, making higher wages necessary for their support. Women's influence in work interactions is less than men's unless they have a managerial title or constitute more than a token 10 to 15 percent of the numbers of men in the work environment (Eagley, 1983; Izraeli, 1983; Kantor, 1977).

Laws set by society reflect beliefs and political power. Myths that women will lie and want to be raped--so they actually consented! (Nemeth, 1980; Ross & Barcher, 1983)--contributed to the unusual "rules of evidence" in rape law. A century ago women were assumed to have good character, but that changed. Males developed systems that protect individual rights of men and jeopardize those of female victims. Hospital personnel, for example, go crazy trying to determine if a woman is reporting rape after having second thoughts (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974). Prosecuting and defense attorneys and judges all have to continue working together after a particular rape charge has been cleared so they may go for less than justice, much less retaliation

(Ross & Barcher, 1983). Women activists have not understood this web of relationships.

In our society, myths about rape perpetuate the messages taken literally by some men that 1) women may not desire sex at first but at some point begin to enjoy it and thus are not victims; 2) that rape is sometimes bad but sometimes justifiable; 3) that woman hating is normal but man hating is deviant; 4) that some women ask for it (the seductress, the attractive, the aloof, the shy one covering up a hidden desire; 5) that females are trophies; and 6) that violent sex is an acceptable physical release, not love, caring, or joy (BarOn & Webster, 1978; Masi, 1981; Sparks, 1978).

Nearly three-fourths of the state laws have been changed within the last decade, because society has recognized violence belies the "sexual" nature of rape. Rape, in the best new laws, is defined in degrees of assault with concomitant degrees of punishment (Bienen, 1980).

Rape has been underreported, so with aggravated assault, it has climbed steeply over the past decade. Actual rape estimates vary, from 20 to 40 percent of the female population to a 46 percent chance within a woman's lifetime (Brownmiller, 1975; Johnson, 1980; Russell & Howell, 1983).

Criticisms of the Theory

How the data showing men under 25, and therefore those with little social and economic power, are the largest group of rapists square with this theory has been captured in a statement of Brownmiller's: "Rape is the means by which all men intimidate all women." She has expressed regret she did not make her meaning clear (Leo, 1984): men as a class recognize the power involved. Actually, the power may be that illustrated in Lord of the Flies (Golding, 1954), where physical strength felt in adolescence toward those who cower or are weaker is so reinforcing, so enhancing is psychological

intimidation that certain males become addicted. But, it is easier to blame external forces than admit internal choices were at fault.

Prevention in this Social Control Theory

Individuals each have about 20 close friends to influence concerning inequities in economic power, changes in laws, and revised views of power. The feminist ideal of shared power should be explored as well as the attitude change literature. Each citizen can participate in the political process, revising favored male status, because to do so is just (Bernard, 1979). Women have been focusing their power on such revisions in society.

Counselors can teach democratic values to the young, applied to heterosexual relations (Rubin, 1965). A democratic value framework, like that taught for politics, government, and citizenship can be extended to sex education. Four applicable democratic values prepare young people to take responsibility for themselves and others and withstand peer group pressure. Adolescents, in particular, change value systems through assimilating new information (Hoffman, 1979). These values are

1) faith in the free play of critical intelligence as well as respect for truth as a definable moral value;
2) respect for the basic worth, equality, and dignity of each individual;
3) belief in the right of self-determination of each human being;
4) a recognition of the need for cooperative effort for the good of all, of behaving as one would have everyone behave in the same situation (Rubin, 1965).

"Protection of one's own health and well-being" as a goal fits into this framework while the ineffective lectures about adhering to adult moral values do not.

Each person can object to sexist violence and vulnerability/oppression portrayals in the media. Social action groups, such as Women Against

Violence Against Women, are made up of individuals, who in this case, lobby against sexist portrayals in the media (Sparks, 1978).

Evolution and Archetypes

The physiological model of rape is posited on physique, libido (drive), and aggression differences between women and men (BarOn & Webster, 1978). Biology is destiny.

Sociobiologist Symons (1979) combined his two fields as he documented the evolution of human sexuality. He concluded that people profit genetically from controlling, manipulating, and exploiting each other sexually. Reproducing fit genes dictates that males will gamble and win in order to copulate freely if the risk is not too great. Women will be selective of the fittest mate because of a greater time commitment in producing and caring for offspring. He stated that among all societies copulation is a service or favor women render to men and not vice versa. Men desire variety for variety's sake and tend toward polygamy. Symons derides formulations of rape that ignore comments of rapists indicating sex, as well as power, motives. Since women do not use force to copulate, they describe rape in line with their own practices.

Symons noted that youth in women and political and economic power in men define physical attractiveness, an extremely important determinant of heterosexual relationships. Scarce commodities are denied certain men, so in anger they take sex from attractive women. However, few men fantasize about rape.

Symons admitted some confounding views. He stated that intertwined motives of power and sexual prowess make it difficult to tease out learned behavior from the innate. Human learning ability makes possible the development of new behaviors. Sexual mores differ across time and culture. He also ignored the fact that not only young women are rape victims. Also, Stephens

(1983) stated that 68 percent of nonindustrial cultures practiced monogamy--a finding not exactly supportive of a polygamous male, since males generally set the laws and mores. Neither Symons nor Stephens commented that about equal numbers of males and females are born, which suggests neither sex is "fittest" by itself.

Humans predispose themselves to potential experiences, explains Archetypes, Stephens' update of Carl Jung's theory (1983). This genetic mode is for certain tendencies to appear, but content of experiences can differ by individuals. The self actualizes not merely as a human being but as a male or female throughout adolescence. We must, in the second half of life, incorporate both female and male archetypes of ourselves--as well as the shadow of evil and aggression--to reach our highest potential.

Stephens indicated that significant differences between political, social, and economic roles of men and women have been thus determined by genetics and archetypes. According to Stephens (1983), men's genes adapted to a more physically demanding aggressive mode of existence (this view of man as hunter has recently been challenged by sociologist Michael Hammond who cited evidence that early man was, instead, a scavenger (Cordes, 1984)). Society limits promiscuity. Characteristics and behavior exist on a continuum, not as present or absent.

Critique of Physiological Theory

Ann Burgess and Lynda Holmstrom (1974) provided an extensive description not only of victims, but also of categories of reasons given by rapists for their act. Two rape patterns were rape and aggression and vice versa, one in service of the other. A third was "sex-aggression defusion" with a strongly sadistic aim. Fourth was "impulse rape," where an antisocial criminal starts to break and enter or rob and it turns into rape. All of

these patterns have a heavy component of aggression, not sexuality, in contrast to Symons' view.

Jung (1913, 1943) himself indicated that the erotic instinct is something questionable, for the animal nature of man may connect with the highest form of spirit. He also said the family stamps its character on the child, but it is not an intellectual process. Indeed, some rapists have successfully argued that hormonal imbalances caused them to rape and averred that by taking depoprovera they can be returned to society. Indicating the "debbil hormone made me do it," or "the poor treatment I got from my parents made me do it," or "society is to blame," all beg the question.

Prevention in this Physiological Theory

Male and female role integration throughout the ages has resulted from different subsistence and childcare needs (Greenfield, 1981). Sheer muscular power is not a typical need of most survival tactics anymore. Time and energy can be expended on positive socialization and emotional family needs to develop new content for experiences, if indeed archetypal predispositions exist (admittedly, humans do not build nests with twigs).

As role integration for women in an earlier time included childcare time investment with other duties such as farming, animal care, and spinning, so, too, now do men and women integrate roles of parenthood with occupation. Parenthood education, as well as sex education, should begin in the schools and be a part of every adolescent's repertoire of knowledge.

Back in the 1830's in New York and later throughout New England, 445 chapters of the Female Reform Society focused women's evangelical efforts on promoting moral purity. The women attempted to reform prostitutes and, like some of our current "whistle tactics," to ostracize, and enact statutory legislation against the men from all walks of life who broke the 7th commandment (Smith-Rosenberg, 1971). One part of the effort was to increase the

wages for women who had to work (and chose lucrative prostitution) to provide alternative employment. Another part was to concentrate on the moral and sexual education of young sons. This education, they felt, was better left to mothers, who were close to the sons and could instill a love of a moral and dignified life. (It is tempting to comment that the lowest rate of rape arrests today is in the New England area.) A strong, implicit component of the movement was against authoritarian male heads of families.

The focus on changing societal norms and using family educational efforts to redefine appropriate sexual behavior can be used today.

Conclusions

In each of the three theoretical approaches, first, a thread of learned behavior is indicated, whether called modeling (imitation, identification, conditioning), education, or new content. Second, people always have a choice of what behavior to act on. Rapists have learned to think in certain ways, to construe behavior violently toward women, whether the thought is a conscious choice at that moment. As Goldberg (1976) says in "The Hazards of Being Male," men are conditioned to score and keep on scoring.

Therefore, each of us adults--men as models must share the burden--has a responsibility to stop those practices, cute remarks, expectations, and consumptions that support rapists' violence toward women.

Women have forgotten to capitalize on their strengths--relationships and verbal persuasiveness. Since learning is defined as a "change in behavior potential," teaching through personal relationships and communication is mandatory.

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